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New York

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Ivanou (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, on your election to these high posts and assure you that in your work you can count on our full support and cooperation.

The tragic events of last year have clearly demonstrated the new challenges and threats of the twenty-first century and the link that exists between problems, international security, disarmament and terrorism. A key factor is the implementation by States of their obligations in the field of international security, non-proliferation and disarmament; above all, the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). There is a need to ensure strict control over existing stockpiles both of weapons of mass destruction and their components and of conventional weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a key instrument providing the international community with a consistent programme of action in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Belarus welcomes the outcome of the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. We also welcome Cuba's decision to join both the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Republic of Belarus attaches particular significance to the earliest entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to ensuring its universality, and calls upon all States that have not yet joined the Treaty to do so as soon as possible. Belarus also welcomes the signing of the Moscow Treaty and the decision by the Russian Federation and the United States to continue the reductions of their nuclear arsenals.

Another extremely important issue is the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) should, at the earliest possible moment, start deliberations on this problem. Belarus believes that nuclear disarmament must be complemented by practical measures aimed at strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, inter alia through the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the setting up of new ones.

Convinced of the need to adopt effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, the Republic of Belarus has submitted to the current session draft resolution A/C.1/57/L.5, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons". Our delegation hopes that

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this draft resolution will once again be supported by all delegations and will be adopted without a vote.

The Republic of Belarus has been pursuing a responsible and consistent policy aimed at fulfilling all of its international obligations, including those under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I), the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. A reaffirmation of the consistency of our policies was the depositing by the Republic of Belarus last year of the instruments of ratification of the "Open Skies" Treaty.

Belarus supports greater transparency measures in armaments and military expenditures and is regularly submitting data for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We attach particular importance to the elaboration of bilateral confidence-building measures and consider this area to be a priority in our foreign policy. Belarus has been conducting a dialogue with its neighbours on these and other specific problems of regional security.

Our country welcomed the holding in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption by the Conference of its Final Document, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Republic of Belarus is taking the necessary steps to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On 15 July 2002 the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, signed the decree on the fulfilling by the Republic of Belarus of international obligations following the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) document on small arms and light weapons. The Republic of Belarus has also submitted to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs detailed information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/24 V entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

The Republic of Belarus supports the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Our country is not a producer of anti-personnel landmines. In 1995 the Republic of Belarus joined the de facto international moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. As it lacks the needed financial and technological resources, the Republic of Belarus at present is not ready to join the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction but has been considering the possibility of joining it in future in the context of receiving international financial and technological assistance to demine and eliminate the stockpiles of such anti-personnel mines. We are ready to begin cooperation on mine clearance and activities to eliminate stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines with all interested parties and will welcome any related proposals or initiatives.

In conclusion, I should like to express our hope that the international community will be able to develop reliable mechanisms to confront new risks and threats to our common security.

Mr. Alpha Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First, I should like warmly to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your unanimous election and assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Guinea in the success of your important task. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and we are sure that together, you and they will successfully and skilfully lead the work of the Committee. To the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, I should like to voice the gratitude of my delegation for his most instructive and succinct introductory statement and the quality of the documents provided to us.

It is clear that we still have good grounds for concern over the future of humanity. The arsenal which the progress of science and technology has now made available to us is fraught with the threat of total and irreversible annihilation. We are all aware of this and indeed deeply concerned regarding certain aspects of the issue. But fear is not sufficient to provide an obstacle to stop what might be irreversible. We need to adopt and pursue a joint plan reflected by sincere and continuing use of effective plans for concerted and agreed action among nations. Our most urgent duty now is to save the world from self-destruction.

How can this be done? The sole way is through multilateral cooperation, which is the most appropriate response to the challenge of building and maintaining international peace and security. Here my country

deplores the serious misunderstandings that continue to exist and once again have prevented the Conference on Disarmament (CD) from reaching agreement on its programme of work. However, the bloody terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were utterly clear regarding the urgent need for the international community to make progress in multilateral cooperation in the disarmament field so as to provide greater potential for success in combating terrorism. Through the mere exercise of their fiendish imagination, the perpetrators of these attacks committed acts resulting in gruesome material damage and casualties which we witnessed that gloomy morning in September. Could we have guessed then that one day, weapons of mass destruction would fall into the hands of terrorist groups? That question requires our careful thought as to what action to take while we still have time to do so.

The non-proliferation initiatives expressed in the provisions of the NPT, the CTBT and START and those of the treaty banning the production of fissile materials, provide the core elements necessary for peace and international security. To achieve the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the unequivocal commitments undertaken by States Parties, there is an imperative need to make those various multilateral agreements universal, provide the conditions for their entry into force, and see to their strict implementation. Here, my delegation urges States that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We are gratified moreover by three major events that are significant positive acts. First, the signing on 24 May 2002 of the Moscow Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, who have taken the initiative to reduce the numbers of their offensive strategic weapons. Secondly, the decision taken by Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Thirdly, the announcements made by the leaders of the Group of Eight in Kananaskis to raise nearly $20 billion within 10 years to sustain the implementation of multilateral treaties designed to prevent the proliferation or illicit acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that 639 million small arms are now circulating and thus serve to fuel more than 20 conflicts throughout the world. As members are aware, my country is part of a subregion which has particularly suffered from the scourge of the proliferation and illicit circulation of these weapons. While in a time of conflict these serve to make hotbeds of tension still more deadly, in peacetime they continue to foment insecurity and banditry in urban centres here. We need also to close our ranks and further advance cooperation among States to strengthen national, regional and international measures to combat the illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms and to implement the Programme of Action adopted during the United Nations 2001 Conference.

In the framework of that campaign I should like here to express the appreciation of the Government of Guinea for the quality of the support provided to States by the Secretariat of the Organization through the Department for Disarmament Affairs. That Department has indeed been fully playing its role as a coordination centre for all activities of United Nations bodies regarding small arms.

It should be emphasized, however, that these activities require support through sufficient financial resources, without which the implementation of post-conflict programmes such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration would remain unclear. This is also a time to express our gratification at the extension, in July 2001, of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on small arms and light weapons and to urge the international community to provide full support for the implementation of this subregional initiative.

Another scourge that continues to claim victims, on the African continent in particular, is that of anti-personnel landmines. These mines continue to be used in conflicts in various regions of the world where they result in unspeakable human suffering and hamper economic development and national reconstruction. Numerous problems of a technical and financial nature also arise in mine clearance operations in the stricken areas, particularly in African countries following the end of conflict. While we can note with satisfaction that some of our bilateral and multilateral partners are providing the necessary technical assistance to States involved in these mine clearance programmes, there is also a need to note the lack of funds to improve medical assistance to victims of mines, provide for their social and economic reintegration, and raise the awareness of peoples regarding the danger of mines. This means that cooperation and international solidarity must be further intensified to rectify the

situation and back the substantive progress carried out in the implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

During the Millennium Summit, the leaders of the world made commitments and defined objectives to achieve by 2015. Inter alia, these include a reduction of poverty by half, the eradication of the AIDS epidemic, and the universalization of primary education. My delegation shares those concerns regarding the fact that the scope of the Action Programme adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development must take into account the objectives mentioned above, and also the Monterrey Consensus which followed the International Conference on Financing for Development. In other words, we believe that there is a need quickly to reverse the negative trend that has resulted in military expenditures in the world now exceeding $800 billion. We continue to believe that the resources released through a reduction in military budgets, and the implementation of disarmament agreements, should serve the economic and social development of all countries, particularly the developing countries. My delegation welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the creation by Member States of a group of governmental experts to reassess the relationship between disarmament and development in the present international context.

To fully shoulder its share of responsibility in our joint task of advancing peace and international security, Africa has initiated a firm policy of the settlement of conflicts through dialogue, national reconciliation, and reconciliation between neighbouring countries. The Republic of Guinea, which is taking an active part in the implementation of this policy, here reaffirms its total commitment to the concept of global peace. We remain dedicated to that peace. We have demonstrated this by using to the utmost our meagre resources to contribute, along with other States of ECOWAS, to putting an end to conflicts in the neighbouring States of Liberia and Sierra Leone and by hosting and providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of refugees whose extended presence has had economic, social, ecological and security consequences for its development. Guinea will continue however to make that choice. On this road which is a difficult but inspiring one, it will always be able to count on the cooperation and solidarity of the international community.

Mr. Kulyk (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I should like to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of our full cooperation and support in the discharge of your duties. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks and gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their continuing support in the furtherance of the work of the Committee.

In the face of the aggravation of world security and stability following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the international community focuses its attention on the role of the existing instruments that serve as the basis for the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes. Universal adherence to and enhancement of the efficiency of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remain among the major tasks in this field. We welcome the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, as well as the Joint Declaration on new strategic relations between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The new agreement, which determines in a legally binding form the limits for the nuclear-weapon potential of the parties, is a logical continuation of the nuclear arms reductions framework, whose basic components are the Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces of 1987 and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991. We expect that this process will be irreversible.

In laying the foundations for the new strategic relationship between the two countries, their leaders underlined the importance of taking into consideration the interrelationship between offensive and defensive arms, which has a special meaning in the circumstances of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) ceasing to exist. We positively assert the intention of the United States and the Russian Federation to determine further areas of cooperation on ABM-related issues. Ukraine, as a country that participated in the implementation of the ABM Treaty, will be ready to contribute to this process, in particular in the context of the consideration of the ballistic missile defence for Europe.

The international community should display caution and avoid a situation where outer space becomes a testing ground or deployment site for sophisticated weapons. There is an urgent need to develop a set of confidence-building measures aimed at

assuring those who express legitimate concerns that their defence capabilities will not be affected by the absence of the ABM Treaty. We are prepared to consider other options, in particular those that were put forward at the Conference on Disarmament this year.

From Ukraine's perspective risks and threats associated with missile proliferation should be addressed not only by means of relevant defence systems but also by international multilateral instruments. The successful conclusion of work on the elaboration of an international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation deserves the strongest support of the international community. We believe that a new multilateral instrument with the potential for universal adherence will provide the international community with additional tools for the strengthening of global security. We are also convinced that the United Nations has an important role to play in curbing missile proliferation.

The fabric of multilateral disarmament and arms control treaties was primarily directed at preventing the possession of weapons of mass destruction by States. Ensuring universal adherence to those instruments remains an important goal for the international community. Ukraine welcomes the historic decision by the Republic of Cuba to become a Party to the NPT. That step provides a good example to those States that remain outside the Treaty.

We are concerned that some non-State actors have aspirations to gain access to weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, related materials and technology. In this regard Ukraine welcomes the initiative of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which was launched in Kananaskis by the leaders of the Group of Eight (G-8). My country is willing to start appropriate negotiations within its framework, since our country faces serious problems which have to be resolved as complementary measures to the nuclear disarmament process, which has already been completed in Ukraine. Ukraine would greatly appreciate assistance from the G-8 countries to address these issues.

Ensuring the proper implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is one of the key priorities of Ukraine in the sphere of non-proliferation and arms control. We are convinced that a complete ban on chemical weapons and their destruction would greatly contribute to the elimination of threats to international security and global and regional stability.

Ukraine calls on all countries that have not yet ratified or signed the Convention to join it as soon as possible. Ukraine considers the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to be one of the important elements of the weapons-of-mass-destruction non-proliferation regime and supports additional measures to ensure full compliance by the States parties with the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe that the suspension of negotiations on the BWC protocol should not lead to the failure of international efforts to strengthen compliance with the Convention. At the same time, we see no major impediments to accommodating the provisions of the draft protocol and the additional proposals in one integrated BWC compliance-control instrument.

Ukraine has continuously expressed its concern about the serious humanitarian consequences of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We are deeply convinced that without the joint practical efforts of the international community to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons it will be impossible to strengthen peace and regional and global security. The Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a significant, but only the first, step towards the goal of controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We hope that within the follow-up process at the global, regional and national levels it will be possible to make the implementation of the Programme of Action more efficient and to find ways to strengthen and develop the measures contained therein.

Ukraine supports the 10 December 2001 decision of the European Union to launch the targeted initiative to respond effectively in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control to the international threat of terrorism by focusing on multilateral instruments, export controls, international cooperation and political dialogue. Ukraine is currently taking steps to join the 1925 Geneva Protocol as a successor State, and to complete the appropriate internal procedures for the ratification of the additional Protocols to the safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We are also engaged in dialogue and cooperation with our international partners on the issue of the elimination of anti-personnel landmines

stockpiled in Ukraine in order to advance the ratification process of the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines.

My delegation will elaborate more on arms control priorities during the focused discussions on specific items on the agenda of the First Committee.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): At the outset, may I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the Committee. We pledge our support to you and are confident that your expertise will lead us to a productive session. Let me also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his invaluable contribution to the cause of disarmament and to officials of his Department in both Geneva and New York for their work. Their contribution is doubly valued as only meagre resources are available to the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We are also happy that Switzerland has joined the United Nations and is now present in the Committee, after having been a member of the Conference on Disarmament since 1996.

The annual session of the First Committee is taking place once again at a critical juncture in relation to international security. The horror of 11 September 2001 and connected events in its aftermath, continues to haunt and affect us. We are pleased to observe in this regard that there is now universal reprehension of all forms of terrorism and greater determination in all international forums to take action to eradicate that menace. How to integrate that objective into our work is the challenge before the First Committee. The jolt of 11 September also appears to have shaken the foundation of the multilateral infrastructure, including in the field of disarmament and international security. The strategic flux of the post-cold-war era is being further compounded by these developments. Long-held security paradigms and concepts are being challenged, sometimes unilaterally, thus affecting agreed principles of multilateral security architecture. In this regard we join those who reaffirm the efficacy of multilateral approaches as a means of achieving greater security for all. In our view, multilateral measures, in particular on disarmament and security issues, by their inherent nature favour dialogue over monologue, accommodation over domination, consultation over prescription and cooperation over confrontation. Therefore, we strongly believe that individual as well as collective security needs and requirements are best met by multilateral measures and consultation processes that enjoy international legitimacy and support. The virtues of such action have been repeated in this forum and elsewhere *ad nauseam* but with little effect.

Perhaps it is not a commonplace to remind ourselves that the prime responsibility of this Committee, derived through the Charter of the United Nations, is to take measures to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Annual assessments of our efforts in this forum must take place against that backdrop. Both our achievements and our failures will be benchmarks as we chart our course by our numerous resolutions to proceed through to the next year.

In this context, the complete and universal elimination of weapons of mass destruction should and will remain the primary goal of all our attempts in this Committee. To be sure, the urgency with, and the process by, which we reach that objective may vary depending on security perceptions and the needs of each State or group of States. However, it is preposterous to entertain notions that seek to legitimize systems of weapons of mass destruction as a means to achieve the security of nations or groups of nations. In our view, security doctrines based on weapons of mass destruction will only lead to the further proliferation of such weapons. It is extremely unlikely that in our fast globalizing world it will be possible to erect safe havens that can be protected by weapons of mass destruction. The potential of such weapons will remain more as an instrument of caution than as a means of deterrence and will be available only to a privileged few. Such a world would be inherently unstable, and the potential for proliferation would be immense. Therefore, once again, we reiterate the need for the complete elimination of all weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes, in particular nuclear programmes, from our midst.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime remains the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent both horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and a concrete commitment eventually to roll back stockpiles as reflected in article VI of the NPT. In this regard the preparatory process for the 2005 NPT Review Conference will no doubt test the commitment of the parties to the Treaty. Despite the commendable efforts

of the Chairman, Ambassador Henrik Salander, the outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the review process, in our view, fell short of expectations. For the success of the 2005 NPT Review Conference we wish to emphasize that it will be fundamentally important to maintain the moratorium on nuclear test explosions, uphold the principle of irreversibility and a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies, and reaffirm security assurances given by nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, the status of implementation of the agreed outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference — the 13 steps towards nuclear disarmament — will be an essential test as we approach 2005.

In this regard we are concerned that as yet there are no signs of any negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty nor do we have a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament. However, as a positive step forward we welcome the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty — the Moscow Treaty — between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on 24 May 2002. That agreement, and its allied bilateral consultation mechanisms, we hope will lead to the irreversible reductions in nuclear weapons to which all nuclear-weapon States committed themselves at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. As another important development we welcome the decision of Cuba to accede to the NPT, which is another step towards strengthening the NPT regime.

Despite several challenges to the efficacy of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) we are pleased to observe that the CTBT has continued to attract new adherents. Similarly, the Convention on the elimination of chemical weapons has also grown in strength and we expect that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) programme for the elimination of that weapons system will go from strength to strength in the years to come.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the single United Nations mandate holder to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements. Although the Conference has not been able to conduct meaningful work for the past several years, that mandate should and will continue. The lack of tangible results in the Conference is by no means the fault of the institution. What we require now is greater compromise on substance and the political will for that purpose. We earnestly hope that this will happen sooner rather than later.

My work as the Special Coordinator on the improved and more effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, work which has spanned almost four sessions of the Conference commencing with the last session of 2001, provided me with an opportunity to reflect on current procedures in the Conference on Disarmament. It was obvious that most delegations were keen to reform its functioning, including the method of decision-making and procedures for the establishment of subsidiary bodies. However, there was reluctance on the part of others, who wished to continue with the status quo. Reform of the procedures of the Conference was not seen as a panacea for all its substantive ills. It seems that procedural innovations are neither feasible nor welcome as a means to effectively address substantive security issues connected with the strategic balance and the larger security interests of States or groups of States.

Sri Lanka supports the early establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with an agreed mandate. Our commitment to that issue is a manifestation of our often repeated belief that outer space is the common heritage of humankind and that therefore we are all equal stakeholders in this last frontier of the world. In this regard we are of the view that outer space should be explored and made use of only in a spirit of cooperation and not in confrontation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to ensure that this last frontier is used only for non-offensive and non-belligerent purposes. It is in that spirit that for many years Sri Lanka, together with Egypt, has co-authored a draft resolution of the First Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This year the delegation of Egypt will present the draft resolution to the Committee. The objective of the draft resolution is primarily to build consensus and, to the extent possible, to extend an agreed framework of action by all States Members of the United Nations, but in particular the space Powers, towards preventing an arms race in outer space. We can ill afford an arms race in outer space at this juncture of human history. If we foreclose on opportunities for discussion and negotiation on this subject now, the international community may have to grapple with calls for non-

proliferation of belligerent weapon systems deployed in outer space in time to come.

The issue of missiles has recently assumed a greater degree of importance. This issue has implications for the process leading to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We recognize the need to address the issue of missiles as a priority. However, the matter has to be approached in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced manner, covering not only non-proliferation and disarmament aspects but also international cooperation for peaceful purposes. Such a comprehensive approach would be the only one that could contribute towards enhancing peace and security at the global and regional levels.

In that context, Sri Lanka has participated in consultations on this issue as it feels that the subject is no longer an issue that can be confined to one group of countries or to a specific export control regime. It is a global challenge that requires an open, constructive and transparent multilateral approach as well as solutions. Any attempt to deal with the proliferation of ballistic missiles must not circumscribe technology transfers that are required for peaceful purposes and should not be designed as a selective and discriminatory approach consisting mainly of technology-denial regimes. What is needed therefore is an inclusive, non-discriminatory, genuinely multilateral arrangement to deal with this important issue. In that regard we welcome the report on this subject submitted this year to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General.

The Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which will resume its work in November this year, is yet another opportunity to sustain the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. It is essential to approach the resumed session of the Review Conference with new vigour and a renewed sense of purpose. We look forward to its successful conduct and to agreement on at least some follow-up measures that are balanced and forward-looking. A total failure once again might mean a serious setback for the Convention itself.

We remain deeply concerned over the illicit transfer and illegal manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted at the United Nations Conference on that issue sets out a realistic and achievable approach. It is apparent that most violations of human rights and humanitarian norms take place as a result of illegal trafficking in and use of small arms and light weapons. Therefore, sustained efforts should be made to strengthen national, regional and international legal regimes that will prevent illegal transfer and use. Since States are bound by universally recognized human rights standards, the right of a State to manufacture, import and retain small arms and light weapons for self-defence and for legitimate security needs must remain undiminished. Nevertheless, increasing loss of life arising from the illegal use by non-State actors makes it an urgent task to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to recognized governments or to entities duly authorized by States.

We recognize that the Ottawa Convention is an important step towards the total elimination of anti-personnel mines. The fact that it has been ratified by 125 States and signed by another 18 States is no doubt a resounding success, primarily in terms of international humanitarian norms. Although Sri Lanka is not a signatory to this important Convention, it has always, in principle, supported its humanitarian objectives, which, among other things, include material and resource assistance to humanitarian mine clearance operations, the rehabilitation of victims and their social and economic reintegration. In this context, at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly my Prime Minister announced that Sri Lanka will be reviewing its position on the Ottawa Convention with a view to becoming a Party to it as confidence in the peace process in my country builds up gradually.

We are encouraged by the outcome of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), which expanded its scope of application to non-international armed conflicts and established a mechanism to consider further steps to reduce the impact of explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines. In this regard, Sri Lanka is now reviewing its

position with regard to the CCW with a view to becoming a party to it, and in particular to its amended Protocols.

Against the backdrop of new challenges to international security, including threats of terrorism, and the fact that a dirty bomb could be a terrorist's weapon of choice, we welcome the recent initiative taken by Germany at the Conference on Disarmament to explore the issue of radiological weapons once again. In the face of apparently inadequate controls over the world's radioactive sources, there seems to be a need to focus on this issue on an urgent basis at an appropriate forum.

Sri Lanka believes that the time has come to take a decision to launch the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). Since SSOD III the world has indeed moved and it is opportune for the United Nations to review the work and procedures of its relevant institutions to ensure that they are best organized and equipped to advance the objectives of the disarmament agenda of the time. During the United Nations Millennium Summit we recall that Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed to convene an international conference to focus on eliminating nuclear dangers. Perhaps SSOD IV will provide a forum for this proposal and set the stage for another major multilateral attempt at agreeing an agenda for the twenty-first century in the field of disarmament, international security and peace.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau and I take this opportunity to express the appreciation and gratitude of my delegation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and the staff of the secretariat that he heads, for their efficient and valuable work.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made to the Committee by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the member countries of the Rio Group.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are key elements for ensuring peaceful coexistence, cooperation and the security of nations. The universal force of international instruments for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is an essential prerequisite, although not the only one, for achieving such coexistence. In this connection, multilateralism and full respect for the United Nations and other international disarmament organizations, not to speak of the Charter, are, in our view, the principal channel for achieving the above-mentioned goals. We are discouraged to note, however, that as we begin this new annual session of the General Assembly, negotiations on disarmament are at a clear impasse. Developments both in the Conference on Disarmament and in the specific field of biological weapons, bear eloquent testimony to this. We welcome the positive bilateral steps that have been taken to decommission part of the nuclear arsenal of those countries with the largest such arsenals and we hope that progress will be made towards genuine nuclear disarmament.

In the area of biological weapons, we hope that after more than six years of effort, negotiations on the possible establishment of mechanisms for the control and verification of this category of arms will be resumed. We therefore share the legitimate concern of the vast majority of countries that advocate, as a matter of priority and urgency, making efforts to overcome the paralysis and to move forward in these areas. In that connection we also support negotiations on a binding convention on the prohibition of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

Just over a year after the terrible terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, thinking of the possible use for terrorist purposes of the different categories of weapons of mass destruction lends these issues even greater urgency today. As other delegations have already pointed out, we wish to reiterate our belief that, with respect to weapons of mass destruction, one of the chief means of guaranteeing peace and security is the negotiation and entry into force of universal, international instruments of a binding nature. In this connection, because of its importance, we wish to draw special attention to the signing by my country of two important instruments. The first is the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the second is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed and ratified by Chile. We attach the greatest importance to its entry into force. While some progress has been made in the signing and ratification of the latter instrument by a large number of countries, its force and universality will become effective only when all States required to do so in order to give it international force, have signed

and ratified the instrument. Until then the nuclear option will remain a latent threat to humanity in the same way as this threat will continue to exist as long as there are States that have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or which, having done so, do not effectively abide by their obligation not to proliferate.

A similar concern arises from failure to achieve the disarmament goals envisaged in article VI of the NPT, a norm on which the International Court of Justice has issued an advisory opinion to the effect that there is an obligation in good faith to undertake and conclude negotiations to bring about nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under effective international control.

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean offers a positive example in the field of non-proliferation. The recent announcement of the decision by Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify in the near future the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), represent significant progress and deserve special mention. Cuba is the last of the 33 States invited to be part of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to have ratified it. With its accession, we note with satisfaction that we have now fully established the first inhabited zone of the free world that is free of nuclear weapons. Lastly, in the field of weapons of mass destruction, the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the functions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which has the complex task of monitoring compliance with its norms, are important developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Chile reaffirms its commitment to the objectives and norms of that Convention and to the important task of the OPCW and the important goal of achieving universality for that organization.

We also note, as a sign of progress, the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missiles in all its aspects based on the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts comprising specialists from the different regions of the world. We trust that this report will serve as a basis for constructive debate, universal in character, on this important matter. To this effort must be added the initiative for the elaboration of a code of conduct on the production and export of missiles, which is likely to receive a significant level of international acceptance.

For more than a decade now Chile has worked assiduously to promote and implement various confidence-building and transparency measures in the region of the Americas, within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS) and within the South American continent, particularly among its own neighbours. We share the view expressed by other countries of the region that these measures have contributed to a climate of peace and friendship with our neighbours and we will continue working to expand and improve these efforts. We wish to take special note of the declaration of South American Presidents signed in Guayaquil, Ecuador, which last July created the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation as a contribution to the security and development of the region. We also firmly support the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and wish to express our appreciation of its growing role as a focal point for various activities in its own particular field. We are especially grateful to the Centre's Director for the efficient work that he has been doing.

The holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001, and its conclusions, constitute an important milestone in the field of arms agreements, with major significance from the humanitarian point of view. Chile firmly supports the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, and to that end we sponsored in November last year the holding of the first regional expert workshop together with the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to examine and propose measures for the evaluation and follow-up to the above-mentioned Conference. This initiative is in addition to other important initiatives taken by our region, such as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, or the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) group, Bolivia and Chile, which aims intensifying efforts to enable these countries to combat this grave scourge in a coordinated manner.

Chile has ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their

Destruction, and during the course of this year, has begun to fulfil its obligations by establishing, first, a national commission on mine clearance. To date, three stockpiles of mines have been destroyed and a report has been submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The last effort destroyed more than 70,000 mines. As a State Party to this important international instrument, Chile intends to make an active contribution to the humanitarian and disarmament purposes that it seeks to achieve by placing special emphasis on the human security approach in keeping with the ministerial Declaration on the promotion of the universalization of this Convention, contained in an annex to the Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held at Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2002.

For the sake of brevity I shall not touch upon numerous other subjects of importance that are on the agenda of the Committee. I shall merely reiterate my delegation's commitment and dedication to the work over which you, Sir, preside, with the aim of making progress towards the complete elimination of the various categories of weapons of mass destruction and their vectors, and the reduction of conventional weapons to the levels necessary for the defence of States and the protection of human security.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your well-deserved election to chair the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I should also like to thank your predecessor and the other members of last year's Bureau for the excellent work they carried out. We are confident that you, Ambassador Kiwanuka, with your vast experience of the United Nations, will preside over our meetings with wisdom and balance.

Allow me also to express my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, for his important statement at the beginning of this general debate, and for his and his staff's dedication and continuous support to this Committee and the cause of disarmament and international security.

Colombia associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the countries that are members of the Rio Group. Through this statement my delegation wishes to clarify and expand its national position on the various items on the agenda of the Committee of particular interest to Colombia. During last year's general debate when we still felt the impact of the acts of international terrorism that took place in this city and elsewhere in the United States, Colombia proposed, in the Committee, to make an important contribution towards eradicating this problem which has become the most serious threat to peace and security. We cited, among other items on our agenda, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, or the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We must again appeal for universal accession to these Conventions and insist on the explicit prohibition of the use of weapons of mass destruction, on restricting the development of new technologies for these weapons, and, naturally, on ensuring that the chemical and bacteriological weapons that already exist do not fall into the hands of terrorists. We again insist that the best guarantee for this is the total elimination of such weapons. Countries that possess chemical weapons should proceed to destroy them in fulfilment of the Convention. They should submit detailed plans on the process of destruction. We must also work towards the inclusion of new arms within the scope of implementation of the Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, and towards the adoption of new protocols in this field. With regard to the Convention on bacteriological weapons, we continue to await agreement on a verification Protocol.

Progress with respect to these weapons of mass destruction remains unsatisfactory, but neither have satisfactory advances been made with regard to the foremost weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons. Not all members of the international community have thus far acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which are the cornerstones for progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. Now more than ever it is of crucial importance for the international community, acting together, to assume its responsibilities with respect to these treaties. Colombia deplores the lack of

results at this year's meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference and stresses the urgency of the full implementation of the 13 measures for nuclear disarmament included in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. On this aspect of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, Colombia reiterates its belief that their total elimination is the best guarantee for international peace and security. We reject doctrines such as deterrence and strategic alliances, and doctrines that propose new uses for nuclear weapons, since they are based on force or threat of the use of force. We continue to believe that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is not a Utopia, but a necessity that is becoming increasingly imperative given the challenges to international peace and security that we face.

That is why we are particularly concerned that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the main forum for negotiations, has not been able to reach agreement on its programme of work. It is an alarming sign that, after four years of paralysis, the Conference has still not been able to work on issues that we all recognize as being substantive and of priority importance for international security. In this difficult context, Colombia welcomes three positive developments of the past year. First, the Moscow Treaty and the joint declaration on a new strategic relationship between the United States of America and the Russian Federation; secondly, the decision of Cuba to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will complete the world's first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone; and, thirdly, the agreement on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

There are two items on the agenda of the First Committee which, for Colombia, because of the internal conflict it is experiencing, are of fundamental importance. I am referring to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and issues involving the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In both these areas we note with satisfaction that substantive progress has been achieved, even though much more remains to be done.

The results of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction continue to reveal a marked reduction in exports of these devices and in the number of countries producing them, a significant increase in the number of mines destroyed, and a significant reduction in the number of victims. However, there is still an urgent need to finally achieve universality for the Convention through the participation of those who are today the largest producers of this type of mine.

With regard to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, statistics issued by the small arms survey of 2002 are impressive regarding the dimensions of the problem and its negative effects on international peace and security. There are already 639 million small arms in the world, 60 per cent of which are illicit. During the 1990s these arms were used to kill almost 4 million civilians, most of them women and children, and they have served to forcefully displace tens of millions of people — here again, mostly women and children. The Secretary-General, with good reason, has affirmed that in the reality of today's world small arms and light weapons are truly weapons of mass destruction. Here I should like to open a parenthesis and thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs for publishing a brochure on that Conference and the main instruments in the field of small arms and light weapons.

Tomorrow the Security Council will hold an open meeting on the role of the Council in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We will be debating the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, submitted pursuant to a Security Council presidential statement approved on 31 August, when Colombia was the President of the Council. We invite all Member States to participate in this debate on the issue.

In the context of the General Assembly, Colombia had the honour of presiding over the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and since last year, with Japan and South Africa, it is the primary sponsor of the draft resolution on this issue. We are also actively participating in the Group of Governmental Experts established to undertake a study to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace small arms and light

weapons. This year's draft resolution would have the General Assembly decide to convene the first of the biennial meetings stipulated in the Programme of Action in July 2003. It would consider further steps to enhance international cooperation against the illicit brokering of these arms and encourage the mobilization of resources and expertise to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. Colombia considers this last issue to be fundamental because the developed world has not yet fulfilled all its commitments under chapter III of the Programme on international cooperation and assistance. We invite all Member States to become sponsors of this draft resolution and to work towards the full implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action at national, regional and global levels, the promotion of the international cooperation and assistance that States require to implement the measures, and towards ensuring adequate follow-up to the Conference.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the commitment of Colombia to the agenda on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security before the Committee and by reiterating our conviction that only a multilateral approach and shared responsibility with regard to these topics will allow us to maintain international peace and security and make an important contribution to global efforts against terrorism.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): Warm felicitations to you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau, accompany the confidence that your extensive skills and experience will provide a fitting closure to our deliberations. You can count on this delegation's full support and cooperation. May I also register our deep appreciation of the contribution of your distinguished predecessor to our work last year.

The decade succeeding the cold war witnessed a remarkable surge in the globalization of the world economy. It also, distressfully, signalled a significant retreat from the principle of equal and collective security, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, two contrasting trends define our endeavours today — economic integration on the one hand, and fragmentation of security on the other. While the impact of the former on human wellbeing so far remains mixed, the verdict on the latter is out and is unequivocal. International security must be truly that, security for all, underpinned by a global architecture founded on cooperation and concord. The impulse for the accumulation and brandishing of power to create asymmetrical security equations, regionally or globally, is intrinsically subversive of peace and has been rejected time and time again in the ebb and flow of history. Only that security structure will endure and engender peace which flows from the United Nations Charter, adheres to its principles, is consistent with its objectives, and respectful of its decisions.

The horrors of war have triggered the vision of a world body acting as the custodian of international peace and security. Retrenchment of this role would be fraught with irreversible and incalculable consequences. Inter-State relations must therefore return to the fold of the Charter. Disputes and differences should be resolved peacefully and within the framework of the United Nations. The use of force, except strictly in self-defence, is fundamentally repugnant to the Charter. The threat of force looms larger than ever in South Asia, which has been described as the most dangerous place on earth. The situation in this volatile region emphatically illustrates the inadmissible preference for war over diplomacy. Nearly a million troops have been deployed along our borders and the line of control in Kashmir with just one objective — to compel Pakistan to back away from the principled position that disputes between India and Pakistan should be resolved through the application of the United Nations Charter and not the use of force. The rejection of this legitimate demand has been accompanied by naked threats of military action and pre-emptive strikes. Is it not a monumental irony that aggression is being threatened against a country for urging the implementation of Security Council resolutions on Kashmir?

Irresponsible sabre-rattling and threats of aggression should now stop and make way for dialogue for the settlement of the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding issues. Continued repression of the Kashmiri people and the organization of electoral charades do not provide the basis for durable peace in South Asia. The reckless build-up of conventional and strategic weapons to underpin the provenly flawed policy of aggrandisement negates the aspirations of the people of South Asia, including the billion citizens of India itself. Military adventurism, fuelled by the misplaced and unachievable illusion of supremacy, has already brought our region to the edge of catastrophe. In his latest report on the work of the

Organization the Secretary-General of the United Nations has said:

> "I have consistently appealed to the parties to resume their bilateral dialogue and to resolve their differences, over Kashmir in particular, by peaceful means. I encourage both sides to reduce their military contingents stationed in Kashmir, and to consider other measures and initiatives aimed at further reducing tensions. My own good offices remain available to both sides to promote a peaceful solution". (*A/57/1, para. 24*)

India's response to these thoughtful words will determine the fate of South Asia. Will it become a land of peace and progress or continue in its lamentable cause of confrontation, backwardness and misery?

The nuclearization of the region also warrants the creation of a new security structure founded on dialogue, peace, arms control and cooperation. Accordingly, Pakistan has proposed the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia encompassing a number of principles whereby India and Pakistan would: formalize their respective unilateral nuclear-test moratoriums, perhaps through a bilateral treaty; refrain from operationally weaponizing nuclear-capable missile systems, deploying nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and keeping them on the alert; formalize the previous understanding to provide prior and adequate notification of flight tests of missiles; observe a moratorium on the acquisition, deployment or development of anti-ballistic missile systems; implement further confidence-building and transparency measures to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident; open discussion on the nuclear-security doctrines of the two countries with a view to forestalling an all-out nuclear arms race; conclude an agreement on the non-use of force, including the non-use of nuclear weapons; and establish a conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for the resolution of disputes, particularly as concerns Kashmir.

We are ready to pursue these proposals in a bilateral dialogue, under United Nations auspices or through third-party mediation. At the global level, the arms control and disarmament agenda has, regrettably, achieved neither its potential nor its promise. In our view the long-standing objective of general and complete disarmament under strong and effective international control, as stipulated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), remains as relevant as ever and should be pursued with the greatest vigour. The following steps are of fundamental importance: first, the existing huge nuclear inventories should be attenuated substantially. The Moscow Treaty constitutes a salutary first step in this direction in that it reduces the imminent threat posed by deployed nuclear weapons. However, the long-term threat remains undiminished. Real threat reduction requires the destruction of nuclear weapons, which we hope will eventually happen, to be followed by general and complete disarmament.

Secondly, the nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should unequivocally commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear weapons. That commitment needs to be operationalized. Negotiations should commence on nuclear disarmament at the earliest possible time in the Conference on Disarmament.

Thirdly, adequate measures in the form of a multilaterally negotiated legal instrument will be necessary to prevent an arms race in outer space. Missile defences create the Sisyphean dilemma of plunging the world into another costly and destabilizing arms race. Sustainable security cannot be achieved in such conditions.

Fourthly, multilateral negotiations must convene to conclude a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Such an instrument would provide credible guarantees against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, regional approaches to international security and disarmament must be strengthened, particularly in tension-ridden regions such as the Middle East and South Asia. Every region has its *sui generis* dynamics. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation require an effective redress of security imbalances at the regional level. In accordance with its traditional resolution on regional disarmament, Pakistan proposed this item for inclusion in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Only one delegation demurred.

Other steps should include: a commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending its entry into force, continued observance of

unilateral moratoriums by the nuclear-weapon States; the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable fissile materials treaty; and full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and removal of artificial hindrances to the promotion of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. At the same time, Member States should strengthen their domestic and export controls on sensitive materials, equipment and technologies, in accordance with their obligations under the relevant international legal instruments. Pakistan, being a party to both the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and a State with nuclear capability, is fully conscious of its responsibilities. A national command authority under the chairmanship of the Head of Government and including three federal ministers and chiefs of armed services, has been set up to provide policy direction, supervise the deployment and employment of assets and approve measures to ensure custodial safety and complete institutional control. We will continue to strengthen our safeguards and controls as required.

Axiomatically, cooperative security at the global, regional and subregional levels cannot be achieved unilaterally. Indeed, the multilateral approach offers the best hope. It is therefore unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament remains mired in an impasse. It must develop a balanced programme of work which answers the concerns of all parties.

The international community also needs to address the issue of missiles in a cooperative spirit. We appreciate the work done by the Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles, set up by the Secretary-General last year. For understandable reasons their report remained inconclusive. We favour the elaboration of a global treaty on missiles as part of a comprehensive disarmament programme. Accordingly, we have proposed the item of "Missiles in all aspects" for inclusion in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. A global treaty will take time. We are ready to consider global interim measures aimed at reducing missile-related threats at all levels. These could range from de-alerting nuclear weapons and missile systems to evolving multilaterally negotiated controls over the transfer of sensitive technologies and supplemented by alternative measures for maintaining military balance, especially in volatile regions, and enhancing cooperation in technologies for peaceful purposes.

We regret the fact that the Fifth biological weapons Convention Review Conference last year had to be suspended. In view of the evolving threats, particularly in the context of bioterrorism, this instrument should be further strengthened. To this end, Pakistan will continue to remain engaged. The reconvened Fifth Review Conference in November will need to agree on a balanced and meaningful follow-up programme, encompassing both regulatory and promotional activities. On the other hand, the work within the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) is proceeding satisfactorily. The CCW is a unique treaty in that it strikes a balance between legitimate security requirements and humanitarian concerns. The preservation of this balance is a prerequisite for the continuing success of the CCW process.

We also draw satisfaction from the adoption of the Programme of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Notwithstanding its imperfections, it provides a good basis to address the issue in an incremental manner. Pakistan has already adopted a national policy in this regard, which is being effectively implemented.

At the deliberations of the First Committee last year we underscored the necessity of addressing the threats to global and regional peace and stability from the increasing sophistication of conventional weapons, the so-called revolution in military affairs. As a first step it was suggested that the United Nations or the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) be given the task of preparing a study with the participation of government experts on the subject. We reiterate our proposal. Dealing with this issue is necessary; otherwise the escalating asymmetry in conventional force capabilities between States, especially at the regional and subregional levels, will continue to abet military adventurism. We must deal with this issue on an urgent basis.

Let me now conclude with a sobering thought. We have been informed that military expenditures consumed $850 billion of this planet's wealth last year, dwarfing, by a wide margin, the gross domestic product of almost half the human race. New and unique weapon systems are being developed or procured. The

multilateral disarmament machinery is virtually out of business. The question arises: has global security been enhanced by these trends? The answer clearly is in the negative. Unequal and fragmented security breeds more insecurity, spawns fear and military expense, while causing deprivation to the very people we seek to protect. Serious and earnest collective efforts need to be initiated to retrieve the enfeebled commitment to multilateralism and to the principle of universal and equal security, lest in the course of time we find ourselves on the wrong side of history.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): Allow me to express my delegations congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to other members of the Bureau. I am confident that your diplomatic experience and skills will guarantee the successful outcome of the work of the Committee.

In the shadow of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and effective export controls gained the utmost importance. The memory of those events is a constant reminder to push forward the international agenda for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control with redoubled efforts. The geographical situation and larger geopolitical neighbourhood of Armenia is putting us in a position of unavoidably confronting the existing traffic in weapons, delivery systems and various sensitive materials. Our commitment to non-proliferation is being fulfilled through the establishment of an effective system of export controls and continuing cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Armenia fully shares the objectives of the international community regarding non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

From the first days of its independence, Armenia rejected the option of developing nuclear energy other than for peaceful purposes. Shortly after its formal accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Armenia, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, undertook the obligation to place all nuclear activities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Today we are pleased to state that we are successfully moving forward in order to strengthen cooperation in the nuclear field. First, the inter-agency process of submitting the Protocols additional to the agreement between the Republic of Armenia and the IAEA on safeguards has been completed and will be presented to the National Assembly for ratification. Nuclear safety continues to remain a matter of the highest priority for the Government of Armenia, which is appropriately reflected in its commitments to various international treaties and agreements.

Armenia welcomes the successful accomplishment of negotiations on the Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and highly commends the efforts made by the Governments of the Central Asian States towards that end. We think that the establishment of such zones is a considerable addition to the non-proliferation regime. Armenia supports the establishment of such zones, once a consensus is reached among concerned States. We strongly believe that such a consensus must be reached prior to seeking international consideration.

We believe that export controls should be established in support of nuclear non-proliferation. We intend to build a national export control system that will guarantee the legitimate use of the various items, providing assurances to the exporter and the international community. We are finalizing the creation of the necessary infrastructure for export controls in Armenia which basically includes two elements — legislation and the regulatory authority. The intergovernmental preparatory process for the adoption of the law, entitled "Law on control over the exports in transit of dual-use items and equipment", has recently been completed. It represents a major milestone in our efforts to strengthen the national export control system. The central idea behind the drafting of the above-mentioned law is to introduce international non-proliferation criteria into national legislation. Through optimizing the export classification, licensing and reporting processes, without unnecessarily burdening peaceful commerce, we look forward to strengthening the multilateral cooperation essential to any effective export control regime.

The problem of small arms and light weapons has several dimensions rather than being merely an arms control and disarmament issue. We should recognize that this problem must be dealt with from an inclusive perspective of national, regional and international security, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. Combating small arms proliferation is another matter of priority for the Armenian Government, which is demonstrated by Armenia's success in establishing

strict State control over the small arms and light weapons on its territory.

In light of the forthcoming fifth anniversary of the Ottawa Convention, Armenia highly appreciates the efforts of the Canadian Government in leading a worldwide campaign to help address the challenge posed by anti-personnel landmines. Despite security considerations and the defensive value of anti-personnel landmines, we nevertheless believe that the human and social cost of landmines far outweighs their military significance. Armenia welcomes the entry into force of the Convention and sees it as an important step forward in the total elimination of an entire category of excessively injurious conventional weapons. We support the Convention and reaffirm our readiness to take measures consistent with its provisions. However, as we stated earlier, Armenia's full participation in the Ottawa Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by the other States in the region.

In order to reach the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, vigorous actions at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels should be pursued. We are ready to further broaden exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the non-proliferation area to make a greater contribution to international and regional efforts towards peace and security.

Mr. Osei (Ghana): My delegation, like others that have preceded it in this debate, wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee, and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau as well. We also take the opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Erdös of Hungary, who demonstrated excellent stewardship as he chaired the Committee's proceedings at a juncture when global peace and security were breached by the terrorist attacks in the United States.

As President Kufuor of Ghana noted in his address to the General Assembly on 13 September, the attack "was ... an affront to civilization itself. ... "Throughout the ages, whenever humanity has found itself confronted with great danger, it is the sense of unity and common purpose that has pulled us through". (*A/57/PV.4*)

Your own earlier statement, Sir, and that of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, struck the same chord of mankind's commonality, when he stated that multilateralism, which ensures a common vision, purpose and security in this global village, should remain the basis for framing the norms on disarmament. Multilateralism should therefore be rekindled if we are to confront global threats, especially terrorism in all its manifestations. As the Under-Secretary-General emphasized, everyone is a stake-holder in the process of disarmament. That includes rich nations, poor nations, developed nations, developing nations, and big and small nations. Indeed, our effectiveness as nations in dealing with threats to international peace and security lies in forging and sustaining the existing multilateral platform on which to re-evaluate our efforts. Yet, our disarmament machinery continues to grind ever more slowly, with its linchpin, the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, once again having failed to agree on a work programme for commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

To overcome the Conference on Disarmament's paralysis it will be necessary to quicken the momentum of negotiations and to require flexibility and compromise, particularly on the part of the nuclear-weapon countries. That will also have a salutary impact on ongoing efforts for the universalization of important treaties, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In this uncertain environment my delegation perceives the final session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission opportune not only in challenging the international community to consider new ways and means to achieve disarmament, but also to examine new measures on confidence-building for restoring the much-needed trust in our negotiations.

Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and also ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco must therefore be welcomed as a breath of fresh air that inspires all of us, especially those Member States that still remain outside the multilateral framework.

Equally, the Under-Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of an international commission on weapons of mass destruction composed of a panel of experts from many Member States, under the joint leadership of chairpersons from both the north and the south, certainly deserves careful and sober consideration. Its projected objective of examining problems relating to the production, stockpiling, proliferation and use by terrorists of such weapons, as well as their means of delivery, will indeed help to

bring to the fore for consideration latent issues that have stalled progress in this area.

We continue to uphold the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference as relevant to the process of multilateralism in disarmament and therefore urge nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate commitment to the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article IV of the Treaty. My delegation also considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, as stepping-stones in the process of achieving nuclear disarmament in a manner that promotes international stability. We therefore reaffirm our support for the Treaties of Pelindaba, Rarotonga and Tlatelolco and also welcome the endeavours of the five Central Asian States to conclude similar arrangements in their region.

The menace posed by small arms and light weapons to many developing countries is a matter of deep concern to all of us. The easy availability of such weapons to non-State actors, often procured with the connivance of State actors, has contributed to this phenomenon. West Africa, which has experienced difficulties in the past, now faces new threats to its stability with a new conflict in Côte d'Ivoire — as its delegation outlined in its statement to the Committee last week. Here again permit me to quote excerpts from the statement delivered by my President to the General Assembly:

> "For the pure and proper development of the global village, certain initiatives by this Organization must be commended and encouraged. Ghana is in full support of United Nations efforts to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We urge Member States to join in the early implementation of the Programme of Action that was adopted in 2001 to stop this trade ...". (*ibid.*)

The Secretary-General's report, in document A/57/160, of 2 July 2002, was equally emphatic on this issue as it concluded that it was the collective responsibility of States, international and regional organizations, and civil society bodies to cooperate to implement the Programme of Action.

Against that background, Ghana looks forward to joining other delegations at next year's biennial review of the Programme to assess follow-up activities at national and subregional levels that are under way in that direction.

In a period of increasing military expenditures and their impact on economic development, the debate about the relationship between disarmament and development stands to benefit immensely from the proposal of the Secretary-General for the establishment of a group of governmental experts to undertake a reappraisal of this issue. We welcome the proposal and hope it will garner the support necessary to ensure its establishment.

In conclusion, let me observe that all of us are sailing on this global ship, albeit in different classes. Yet the vagaries of the weather and the waves which buffet the ship affect all of us, irrespective of which class we are in. Our common destiny compels us to cooperate on various disarmament issues more than anything else to ensure our common survival.

Finally, my delegation commends the Department for Disarmament Affairs for its role in shaping the United Nations agenda on the issue. Here I should like to place on record our sincere appreciation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and also the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and Canada, for jointly sponsoring in Accra, Ghana, early this year, the subregional workshop on transparency in armaments. No doubt, the conclusions of the workshop will be useful in the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions at the respective domestic levels.

Mr. Christofides (Cyprus): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We have no doubt that with your long experience and wise guidance the goals of the Committee will be fully achieved. I should also like to assure you of the Cyprus delegation's full support in your important task.

The Republic of Cyprus has aligned itself with the comprehensive statement delivered by the Danish President of the European Union and I will thus limit this intervention to some issues of particular interest to my delegation and report some recent initiatives of my Government in the field of disarmament.

We are much encouraged by the overwhelming response of the international community to the ban on anti-personnel mines. As is known, Cyprus is an original signatory of the Ottawa Convention and I wish

to reiterate in this respect that despite the continuing foreign occupation of almost 40 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and against the background of a constant threat posed by 40,000 occupation troops stationed on the island, we are currently exerting all efforts to complete the ratification process before the end of the year. We are doing so as an expression of our determination to join the international community in its efforts to eliminate this totally inhumane method of warfare. In the meantime, as a complete demonstration of our political will, and as part of our commitment to international norms such as the ones set by the Convention, we have already taken several concrete steps in line with its aims. These include mine clearance operations, refurbishment of existing minefields and the destruction of stockpiles. It is noted that the Government of Cyprus has, since 1983, cleared 10 minefields adjacent to a buffer zone, and during the past two years destroyed more than 11,000 mines of various types.

Furthermore, the Government of Cyprus has put forward a proposal for the clearing of all minefields laid within the buffer zone in an effort to reduce tension and put an end to the threat against innocent human life, thus contributing to the return of these areas to conditions of normality and safety. We have indicated both to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) our determination to proceed unilaterally in case the Turkish side does not cooperate in this regard, and to work out, in consultation with them, the modalities and the order to be followed in the process of clearing the National Guard's minefields within the buffer zone.

We are currently engaged in direct talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General in order to reach a just, workable and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions. A matter of great concern both for the Government and the people of Cyprus is the issue of security. In this context I should like to recall once again the proposal made by President Clerides for the demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, which we consider as a genuine offer for peace on the island and in the region at large. President Clerides' proposal calls for a specific programme aimed at the dismantling of all local military forces, the withdrawal of all foreign forces and settlers from the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and its demilitarization, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations resolutions. These proposals also envisage the stationing in Cyprus of an international force with an appropriate mandate from the Security Council.

It is within this context that my Government has decided and proceeded with the assistance of UNFICYP to the destruction of approximately 4,500 small arms, which have been in United Nations custody since 1972. This unilateral move by the Government of Cyprus was aimed at improving the climate of the peace talks and at heeding the call of the United Nations Secretary-General to reduce armaments on the island. I should also like to note that in March 2000, the Government of the Republic, in agreement with UNFICYP, proceeded with the destruction of the entire stock of ammunition imported with these arms.

Finally, I should like to refer briefly to the Conference on Disarmament and to join previous speakers in expressing our concern at its continuing inability to undertake substantive work. With regard to the membership of the Conference, the Republic of Cyprus reiterates its wish to participate fully in the work of this single, multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. We firmly believe that further enlargement of the Conference would not in any way hinder its effectiveness. On the contrary, the Conference's reform and its expansion to all members wishing to participate in its work, might give a new impetus to the forum.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.